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# The Swiss Observer

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## NEWS AT RANDOM

### Federal

Backed by lists containing over 100,000 signatures the socialist member Reinhardt tabled a motion urging the Federal Council to restore normal diplomatic relations with Russia. In the National Council Federal Councillor Pilet-Golaz, delivered on March 29th, a protracted and well-prepared statement reviewing — and dwelling on — the different phases of Russia's history since October 1917. Our Foreign Minister was non-committal and gave the impression of regarding any change in our pre-war diplomatic relations with an uneasy mind lest such a change might be regarded as a departure from our policy of strict neutrality. We hope to reproduce in full the very interesting statement in a future issue. On April 3rd Swiss Radio announced that the Federal Council while upholding the existing trade pact declines to extend official recognition to the Soviet Union. The decision is said to be based on the neutrality declaration of 1939 which laid down that no changes in the diplomatic relations with other countries could be made during the war.

The existing trade agreement with Germany concluded for periods of three months last October and establishing a clearing payment system has been extended till June next.

The total indebtedness of the Confederation at the end of 1943 was 5553.6 million francs, an increase of 1116.7 million francs compared with the previous period.

The 550 million francs loan submitted for public subscription from March 31st to April 14th in three different denominations found an extremely well-disposed market, the total amount applied for reaching 960 million francs which with the exception of 15 million is being retained by the Government.

### Cantonal

Considerable damage was caused when the agricultural establishment including a distillery, large stables and stock, machinery, etc., belonging to the communal councillor

Anton Büeler, in Hasli near Seewen (Schwyz) was practically reduced to ashes on Friday night, February 11th.

Based on judicial and technical opinion, the government of the canton of Grisons has refused the requested concession for the erection of the great power plant foreseen in the Hinterrheintal, which would have put the villages of Splügen, Medels and Nufenen under water. Instead of this great plant several smaller ones are to be erected much to the satisfaction of the inhabitants of the threatened valley.

The municipal theatre in Lucerne is to receive a subsidy of Frs.205,000 for the next winter season. A further considerable sum has also been voted by the town fathers to enable the steamship company on the lake to carry on; for the last twenty-five years this undertaking has been enjoying financial tonics.

In spite of signs to the contrary the comparatively healthy economic conditions in the western part of our country are reflected by the accounts of the municipality of Berne. A deficit of about five million francs was anticipated but the accounts to the end of last year showed a surplus of Frs.25,000.

An avalanche descended at the beginning of this month along the lake of Brienz and the Brünig line had to be worked by a shuttle service.

The canton of Fribourg in view of the anticipated post-war boom conditions has decided to make a strong bid for attracting tourism to its regions.

The huntsmen and gamekeepers in the canton Solothurn have had a record year as well as the cantonal treasury which netted nearly a hundred thousand francs for "Patents."

A new political party has come into being in Basle and styles itself "Partei der Arbeit;" it is a counterpart of a new group in Geneva under the name "Parti Ouvrier Suisse" and promises to support the socialists whenever possible.

The influenza epidemic in Basle has made it necessary to adapt one of the local school buildings as an emergency hospital.

April 1st, 1944, will be recorded in our history books as a black-letter day: at about eleven in the morning Schaffhausen was heavily bombed by foreign aircraft. Two American Liberator formations of about